

Oral history with 18 year old white male, Breathitt County, Kentucky (Transcription)

C 39 page 22 CAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN DIALECTS CASSETTE NO. 39 SIDE B The first excerpt is taken from original tape W 104.

RESPONDENT: The people they interviewed, one of them he worked at a coal mine. He was a augur operator. And he's told me how he run the augur, what kind of, know, material used the coal for it then. Got out the hill.

Q: Was it, you know, people pretty, you know, sort of ready to talk about things, you know, like about the history of the county? Or did you have a hard time finding people who ...?

R: I had a hard time finding people that would talk.

Q: What did they say, they just sort of didn't want to bother with it?

R: They said they didn't know nothing about the history of the county.

Q: Yeah, but of course you know, how do you convince them that just, you know, the personal experiences are part of, you know, the history of the county?

R: Ah, some of them, it's awful hard to. Some of them, I couldn't.

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R: I worked on it two weeks and got discouraged and quit.

Q: Oh. Did they sort of like feel afraid of the machinery, so that made them nervous to ...

R: Yeah.

Q: Well, ...

R: They don't want to talk into them.

Q: Well, what, you know, you know the situation, you know where you ask people, you know, to tell me about yourself. You know, where you were born, when you were born, and you know, your family

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and your early days in school and stuff.

R: Do you want me to tell you about mine?

Q: Yeah, yeah!

R: I was borned in Brickett County. I'm a, I was born at Cut Oak, Kentucky. And just after that we moved to Lick Branch, across the hill from where it was at. And I've lived there the

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rest of my life. And I went to a one-room school for seven years. With, had one teacher, there, she teached for four years.

Q: Everybody was the same story.

R: Yeah. There was a, when I first started there was about fifty there in the school, but as the years went on people moved off and old ones went out of school and they wasn't too many more going, coming back in, you know. Into the community there.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

R: At Brickett.

Q: And then now how far along are you?

R: This right here is my second semester at Lee's.

Q: So, do you think you'll go here next year?

R: Yeah, I think I will.

Q: And then what? What have you planned?

R: I'm going to Moorehead in elementary education.

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Q: Really? Do you want to come back here and teach?

R: I'd like to teach somewhere in the county here.

Q: What about your family? Do you have brothers and sisters in... ?

R: I've got nine brothers and sisters together. They don't, they don't, most of them's moved off from this county.

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Q: So you're young, you're one of the younger ones in the family?

R: Yeah, there's one younger than I am.

Q: And what about your folks, what do they do?

R: Well, my father, he works on the railroad and my mother is real sick so she couldn't do anything. My father's got, worked on the railroad about twelve years now.

Q: Will he be able to retire sometime?

R: Yeah, he has to have about twenty years of work on the railroad and sixty years old.

Q: What's the problem with your mom?

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R: She's got sugar diabetes and heart trouble.

Q: Where did, did they go to school in the county?

R: Ah, what to, well they went, they did.

Q: Where did they go and how far did they go?

R: My father went to a school called the Stapper Fork. My mother went to Cane Creek School.

Q: And how did (), did they go through grade school?

R: No, my father went to the third grade and my mother went to the fourth.

Q: So they must be really proud of you.

R: Yeah, uh-huh. And I'm the only one of the children so far that's started to college.

Q: Wow, the first one in the family.

R: Mm-hmm.

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Q: Did sort of, what are the attitudes around the people sort of think, well, education's a luxury, or is it sort of like....

R: Well, now they think it's more of a necessity for a man to

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go on to college, but they, it seems like for all (), they don't want the girls and women to even go through high school.

Q: They think they're going to get married and ...?

R: Yeah. They say they don't need the education to be a housewife.

Q: How do you feel about that?

R: Well, my way of thinking is you get now many complex machines, you just won't () with a college education to learn how to operate them at all.

Q: Oh, what about some of your teachers you've had? Have you had any really good ones? Or can you think of some you've had along the way that have been really bad?

R: Well, when I was in grade school, we learned a lot, but the teacher wasn't all that, you know, good. But they teached us, we learned, but they didn't teach us all that much, you know. They teached us math and spelling and English, and that was it. About it.

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Q: Can you think of anybody you had that was really bad?

R: No, not really.

Q: Some worse than others, maybe?

R: Yeah, some was worse.

Q: What were some of the things you didn't like?

R: Well, most of it was walking out to school. 'Cause I had to walk about a quarter of a mile each way. And I went several years and never missed a day.

Q: So do you live in, I mean snow and all that?

R: Yeah.

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Q: Okay, so you know you haven't lived a long time, but I've sort of, even in your short life, do you see things that have changed around the county? The way people act, or the way they dress? You know, buildings or things like that?

R: Well, I can remember when there wasn't very many televisions in the, in this county. They come in, you know, the last seven or eight years into this county on a great scale.

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Q: And what about the way that people dress, they act, and that sort of thing. Have a lot of things changed?

R: Well, most of it, just for me with the place above where I live at, and people seem like they gotten nosey.

Q: Oh really? What, why do you say that?

R: Well, you can't even go down the road without walking, with somebody asked you where are you going? and how long you going to be gone? And everybody looks to me as if I were to kin to everybody else. It was just about like one family.

Q: How many people are there right, just near (), the area where you ...?

R: There are about a hundred and twenty, I'd say.

Q: Do they sort of, do they feel like they're just one small community? Do they feel like they're just part of Jackson or...?

R: Well, I live about seventeen miles out of town here, and we's feel like, about all like one family.

Q: Do, I mean everybody's situation is about the same and ...? Is there any people, I mean, just within that small community that have more than other people or are they just about the same?

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R: Well, everybody has about the same, but they, some of them won't try to help theirself and they don't have much as the ones that's try to help themselves.

Q: Do they have jobs? Most of them, or ...?

R: Most of them do. Some of them runs a, they got a little store down on the creek, one family has, they're (). Most of them works.

Q: Where do they work?

R: Well, a lot of them works on this Nelson program, and railroad. That's a program where they work on bridges and community roads and stuff like this. The county pays.

Q: Do they sort of, do they think that the people in Jackson are sort of different or do they, I mean just like, you know, do they feel like they're the country people and that Jackson people are city people? Or do they sort of feel any different?

R: Well, I, they just feels Jackson people's them and they're Jackson folks so they don't feel different (). Feel like Jackson people ain't no better than they are. They're no better than people from Jackson.

Q: Maybe they just feel like everybody in the county is part of the county ..

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R: Yeah.

Q: ... instead of country and city. A lot of the people on the oral history tapes I was listening to last night were, you know, talking about how hard things used to be. You know, nobody had any money. How do you think things are now, do you think, how about your family? Is it really, you know, with prices going

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up, is it really hard, you know, to sort of make ends meet and stuff?

R: Well, I think it's pretty hard, but my father works and my mother manages the money, actually, she takes care of it when he get, he, works it out and she, you know, spends it best places.

Q: Sort of budget and ...

R: Yeah.

Q: You grow a lot of your own food? Or do you have to buty a lot of it?

R: We grows it, most of our food. We grow hogs, so we don't have to buy too much meat, pork. We grow a garden so we don't have to buy too much fruit stuff. Some of us has to buy what we can't grow in this area here.

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Q: That be just like, you know, canned things and...

R: Yeah we can a lot of stuff and we got a deep freeze we just put it into.

Q: What about your, your house? Do you have like a smokehouse? A barn or how, what's your situation?

R: Yeah, we got a house there and a barn, and then another little house, you know, there, and we got a smokehouse. We use all of them.

Q: Did your family, did your father build your house? Or was it in the family before?

R: No, my father built the house for ().

Q: What, when did he build it?

R: Oh, well he built it twenty one years ago, part of it, and he moved off and moved back and built more onto it. And we're

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building more onto it now.

Q: Oh yeah?

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R: A place for another bedroom. 'Cause the family's moved out and they got families of their own.

Q: Very interesting.

R: And they come in, we ain't got room to ().

Q: Do, is there like a lot of land around your place for to fit together.

R: Well, the houses are too close together, but they're not too much bottomland, most of it's hills.

Q: Does your dad own a lot of land there?

R: Yeah, he owns the land where we live and a little bit more around it.

Q: Have most of the kids in your family, they don't live at home any more, but have they moved out of the county or are they just around in ...?

R: Two of them still lives in the county, and they're three of us at home. About three of them's moved off. One of them lives in Tennessee, and the other lives in Kentucky. Far-off, you know.

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Q: What do you think most of the people around are working really hard to get? You know, is it saving money for their kids' education, or cars or buy a house, or put the plumbing in ...?

R: I think that most peoples will save their money to try to buy them a nice place to live. The community where we live at you know, people just knows you. Aside from that, they don't bother you, no way. You can lay a thing down and go back and

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pick it up.

Q: What about plumbing? Is there a problem? Is there indoor plumbing? Or do you have to go out to get your water?

R: Most people's got indoor plumbing, but they have to put it in themself, you know.

Q: What have you got in your house?

R: Yeah, we got indoor plumbing.

Q: Did your dad have to put it in?

R: Yeah, we put the most of it in. But there's some that we couldn't hook up. We got a plumber to hook up for us.

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Q: Do, can you think of, you know, maybe ideas and attitudes that your folks have that are different than from yours? Maybe different things they think about dating or the way you wear your clothes or those kinds of things?

R: No, they don't say nothing to me about that, the way I want to, but the girls in the house should be up no later than ten or eleven o'clock at night, but they don't say nothing to me.

Q: Do you have a car?

R: Yeah. It's my daddy's. But he can't drive, so I drive it.

Q: Do you service it? Are you pretty independent so you can just come and go? What about as to your growing a beard, did they object to that? How do they deal with that beard?

R: Well, they don't want me to grow all over my face. They don't care about sideburns, but they don't want me to grow it over my face.

Q: (). A boyfriend, or old boyfriend had a moustache and her daddy didn't like that.